

## commander's view



VADM John G. Cotton

For the past few weeks we have mourned the tragic loss of our seven shipmates from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14 (NMCB-14), based in Jacksonville, Fla. In February, these brave Seabees were mobilized along with other personnel, and after going through an intensive training period, were deployed to the Central Command Area of Responsibility. In total, nearly 400 of the members of NMCB-14 were deployed (along with members of NMCB-3, 5 and 74) to help rebuild

the Iraqi infrastructure. Only days after

arriving in theater, they were attacked in two separate incidents, once in a convoy operation, and again in garrison, leaving seven dead and 34 wounded – the Navy's heaviest losses in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attack, we have lost 17 of our Navy Reservists to terrorist and combat-related incidents: six at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, one in the World Trade Center attack, three in theater and the seven from NMCB-14. Many more are recovering from serious injuries. These events have forever changed our nation and devastated the lives of our friends and families. Our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who knew and loved these heroes – they will be forever honored and remembered.

As our alignment and efficiency initiatives are accelerating, we are rapidly becoming a more effective Navy. These transformational efforts could not happen without the commitment of leadership at every Navy Reserve Activity, and the cooperation of every unit and Reservist. It is your dedication to mission accomplishment and ability to adapt to any tasking that makes our profession the most highly respected in the United States today, and our military the most admired world-wide. These are the qualities that bind us in peace and in war, at home and abroad. Sadly, the tragic losses of our shipmates underscore the cost of war and the price of freedom. Whether serving on active duty or as "RE-servists," we are privileged to work alongside our shipmates, with the full support of our families, for America's liberties and for our friend's and allies'. For

this devotion to duty, we can never thank you and your families enough.

We have been able to meet or chat with many superb sailors this month, starting with EM2 Michael West from the New Orleans boathouse crew. His favorite Navy memory is duty aboard USS Stephen W. Groves (FFG 29) and a six-month deployment to South America. He spoke highly of his mentor there, EMC Keith Allen Jinright, and is starting to take some college courses. FTS AT1 Gene Gollahon, assigned to the "River Rattlers" of Strike Fighter Squadron 204 (VFA-204) at NAS JRB New Orleans, has served for 15 years in many strike fighter squadrons and remembers Operation Desert Storm with VFA-83. His mentor is the quality assurance chief, ASC James Demetrius Barlow, who helps him all the time. Gollahon's goal is to make Master Chief. On the flight line at NAS Pensacola, Fla., as we manned up an H-60 from the "Jaguars" of Light Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 60 (HSL-60) for a flight to Camp Shelby, Miss., to visit with NMCBs-24 and 27, we were able to congratulate a very surprised (and smiling) AM3 Robby Auringer with the news that he was on the advancement list for AM2. Later we called two other squadron members in Jacksonville, Fla., AW1 Roland Dupras, a former Sailor of the Year and busy Selected Reservist, and PR3 Meagan Osborn, who's in her first tour and proudly serving like many other of her family members who have served in the Navy and Army. Dupras' goal is to make Chief, and his mentor is the operations leading chief petty officer, AWC Mark F. Richardson, who was on detachment. Osborn would like to pursue an officer commissioning program and praised AZ1 Jamie Michelle Bardee as her mentor. All of these Sailors easily explained our Navy Reserve vision of "support to the fleet, ready and fully integrated," and were also familiar with the 5-4-3-2-1 countdown brief. I look forward to calling more centers and Sailors every week to ask them what they think about our goals and their dreams!

In closing, I ask that each of you pause for a moment of silence to honor our fallen shipmates, and to pray for their friends and families. Please do your best to take care of your own families, and if you can, help those whose loved ones are deployed. Thank you for the tremendous contributions each and every one of you are making to our Navy and great country.

**John G. Cotton**  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

LT James Tran, a catapult shooter, signals for the launch of an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the "Vampires" of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine (VX-9) aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). The Bremerton, Wash.-based aircraft carrier underway for her first time since completing a successful Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). Vinson and embarked Fleet Reserve Squadrons (FRS) conduct training and carrier qualifications off the Southern California coast.

## sailors matter



**FORMC(AW/NAC)**  
**Thomas W. Mobley**

Seven yellow ribbons now flutter in the breeze beneath the Seabee at the headquarters for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14 (NMCB-14) in Jacksonville, Fla. Those ribbons represent the patriotic sacrifice of seven of our shipmates. These Reservists, their wounded shipmates and their shipmates remaining to complete the mission in Iraq all served with great pride as part of a unit with a long history of service. NMCB-14 mobilized about 400 of the battalions Sailors in February and shipped out first to Kuwait in March, then to Iraq in April.

Our shipmates from NMCB-14 made the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terrorism. This group included Ronnie Ginther, who enjoyed taking his 8-year-old daughter, Alayna, to hang out with his guy friends to help fix cars. Robert Jenkins, who previously earned commendations for work on a hospital in Orlando and building schools in Haiti. Michael Anderson had just celebrated his eighth wedding anniversary. Jason Dwelling served on active duty

for six years before joining the Reserves in August 2000. Christopher Dickerson affiliated with the Reserves last year after 11 years of active duty. Scott McHugh's high school classmates are planning to give an annual scholarship in his honor to graduates of Spanish River High School. Trace Dossett served for six years on a submarine before joining the Reserves about a year ago.

NMCB-14 is a rebirth of the 14th Mobile Construction Battalion, which saw action in World War II in New Caldeonia, New Hebrides, Guadalcanal and Okinawa. The battalion was disestablished in 1946 and recommissioned in 1961 as a Navy Reserve unit. This battalion exemplifies the Seabee motto: "We can build and we can fight."

I was fortunate to recently visit with our Seabees in Kuwait in Bahrain. They are doing extraordinary work in restoring the region. In Iraq, NMCB-14 was actively engaged in the construction of facilities to improve quality of life for the people of Iraq. They had been rebuilding schools, helping restore water and providing electrical power to parts of Iraq. Since the tragic events that claimed the lives of these Seabees, many Reservists have been calling to volunteer to finish the work. Our mission remains clear. In their honor we must finish the job.

**Thomas W. Mobley**  
**Force Master Chief, U.S. Navy Reserve**

## what's new

### **Military phone card donation program goes public**

WASHINGTON – The Department of Defense (DoD) has announced that any American can now help troops in contingency operations call home.

DoD has authorized the Armed Services Exchanges to sell prepaid calling cards to any individual or organization that wishes to purchase cards for troops who are deployed. The "Help Our Troops Call Home" program is designed to help service members call home from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

For those wishing to donate a prepaid calling card to a military member may log onto any of the three Armed Services Exchange Web sites:

- Army and Air Force Exchange Service **[www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)**
- Navy Exchange Service Command **[www.navy-nex.com](http://www.navy-nex.com)**
- Marine Corps Exchange **[www.usmc-mccs.org](http://www.usmc-mccs.org)**

Click the "Help Our Troops Call Home" link. From there, a prepaid calling card may be purchased for an individual at his or her deployed address or to "any service member" deployed or hospitalized. The Armed Services Exchanges will distribute cards donated to "any service member" through the American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society and the Fisher House Foundation.

The Armed Services Exchanges operate telephone call centers

in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and other countries and aboard ships – anywhere service members are deployed in support of OEF and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The cards available through the "Help Our Troops Call Home" program offer the best value for calls made from the call centers, never expire, and there are no added charges or connection fees.

—Department of Defense news release

### **Innovative military/construction alliance gains ground**

WASHINGTON – "Helmets to Hardhats" (H2H) has entered its second year of helping servicemen and women land career-making slots in the construction industry. The congressionally-funded, one-of-a-kind program is administered by a non-profit trust, and connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active duty members with meaningful work, good pay and a sense of community in the building trades.

The H2H interactive Web-based education and registration program has listed thousands of career opportunities in its first year with the Boilermakers, Ironworkers, Insulators, Roofers and 11 other unions. More than 15,000 candidates have registered at **[www.helmetstohardhats.org](http://www.helmetstohardhats.org)**; many have accepted, or are now in the process of qualifying for, careers as steelworkers, plumbers and pipe fitters, cement masons, carpenters, electricians, sheet metal workers and the host of trades.

## family focus



**Yonna Diggs**  
Force Ombudsman

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, families of the Reserve and Guard are being tasked with supporting the absence of the military member in sometimes a very short notice. The command ombudsman will be called upon to assist these families as they face this life transition. Deployments are never easy, but with some prior planning. If you have never utilized an Ombudsman here are some ways that they can be of assistance:

1. Ombudsmen work with the command to help families better understand how to use the military chain of command to work through their concerns or issues.
2. They are the source of information that can assist families and act as liaison between the command and the families.
3. Ombudsmen often provide regular newsletters that updates families on events happening at the command and on military installations.
4. They act as advocate for families, when they need assistance in working through problems or concerns that affect their families.
5. Ombudsmen represent the commanding officer on various boards and committees that deal with family readiness.

If your command does not have an ombudsman, you may want to inquire about taking on this valuable role. If you are selected by the command, you are required to attend the Ombudsman Basic Training Course, which is taught in various locations around the country.

Commanding officers recruiting for ombudsmen should seek potential candidates from members of spouses groups, recommendations of other ombudsmen and those that have expressed an interest in the position.

Contact me at [Yonna.Diggs@navy.mil](mailto:Yonna.Diggs@navy.mil) for additional information about the ombudsman program.

families  
of  
reservists

This month "The Navy Reservist" launches a new resource guide for the families of our Reservists. In association with the "Family Focus" column by our Ombudsman at Large, Yonna Diggs, a listing of Web sites with specific resources for families will be offered. Here are three to keep handy to support our families:

**LIFELines ([www.lifelines.navy.mil](http://www.lifelines.navy.mil)):** This is the official quality of life service delivery network for the Department of the Navy. This site offers evolving issues, military news, direct links to additional family resources and guides on careers, family, relocation, education and much more. It is the most comprehensive resource guide for Navy families.

**TRICARE ([www.tricare.org](http://www.tricare.org)):** The official Department of Defense Web site on your military health care plan provides guidance on benefits, resources and how to get help. This site also provides toll-free telephone numbers to ensure quick access to answer individual health care questions.

**Navy One Source ([www.navyonesource.com](http://www.navyonesource.com)):** Navy One Source provides help to Sailors and family members anytime, anywhere. Whether you have a simple question or a complex concern, Navy One Source has expert advice and support to help. It is at no cost to you, confidential and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To log on, you will need the User ID: Navy and password: Sailor.

If you know of specific Web sites that are useful for Navy Reserve families, e-mail them to "The Navy Reservist" at [navresfor\\_tnr@navy.mil](mailto:navresfor_tnr@navy.mil).



U.S. Navy divers assigned to the Naval Reserves (NR) Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit One Seven (EOD-MU 17) transit Crescent Harbor near Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, while preparing for a training dive.



# a look back



40 years ago

**1964**—Legislation limited the quotas for Navy and Marine Corps Reservists from 160 to 85 for appointments to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Reservists meeting criteria for appointment are urged to apply.



20 years ago

**1984**—The Navy Reserve launched a new program offering an opportunity for Merchant Marine ensigns to be recalled to extended active duty as Training and Administration of Reserve (TAR) officers. The officers, 50 in 1984 and another 50 in 1985, were provided training at the Surface Warfare Officers School followed by a tour at sea.



10 years ago

**1994**—Six Navy Reserve frigates from Destroyer Squadron Six completed an eight-day exercise that started off the coast of Charleston, S.C., and conclude off the coast of Puerto Rico. The exercise included firing of 24 missiles and allowed the squadron wide latitude to evaluate dual and reengagement scenarios in order to assess the capability of the MK-92 fire control system against both high and low elevation targets.



Photo by PHAN Chris M. Valdez

An F/A-18C Hornet assigned to Marine Strike Fighter Squadron One Three Seven (VMFA-137) launches from USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) as the catapault safety observer looks on. The Bremerton Wash. nuclear powered aircraft carrier is underway for the first time since completing a successful Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) inspection. Vinson and embarked Fleet Reserve Squadrons (FRS) are conducting training and carrier qualifications off the Southern California coast.

## what's new

Candidates need no previous construction experience to benefit from the program. Helmets to Hardhats offers one of the best job packages in the industry and, depending on the skill required for the trade, hundreds of hours of classroom training for apprentices and from 4- to 8-thousand hours of on-the-job training (OJT) with mentoring by experienced journeymen. A union apprentice receives a percentage of a journeyman's wage and full benefits: pension, medical, training and more. A Helmets to Hardhats candidate receives all that, plus G.I. Bill funds, if eligible.

Helmets to Hardhats is administered by the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans Employment, which is directed by a board of trustees composed of an equal number of labor and employer trustees. For more information, visit

**[www.helmetstohardhats.org](http://www.helmetstohardhats.org)**

—Helmets to Hard Hats Public Affairs



Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Jeffrey Tabor, of Greenwood, Ind., assigned to the "Emerald Knights" of the Navy Reserve (NR) Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Seven Five (HS-75) performs maintenance in the cockpit of an MH-60S Knight Hawk aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). Reagan is underway conducting flight deck certifications off the coast of Virginia before transiting to its permanent homeport of San Diego in late May.

Photo by PHAN Jacob Childre